

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/671,153

Examiner

James A. Thompson

Applicant(s)

FUSE, HIROYUKI

Art Unit

2625

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 09 February 2007.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-17.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

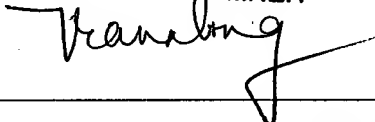
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
- (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
- 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☐ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

DOUGLAS Q. TRAN
PRIMARY EXAMINER



James A. Thompson
Examiner
Technology Division 2625

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments, see pages 7-9, filed 09 February 2007, with respect to the rejections of claims 1-17 under 35 USC §103(a) have been fully considered and are persuasive. Examiner agrees that the present amendments to the claims overcome the combination of references set forth in the previous office action, mailed 13 November 2006. Examiner also agrees that the presently amended claims are fully supported by the present specification. Accordingly, the rejections of claims 1-17 under 35 USC §103(a) have been withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

2. **Claims 1-17 are allowed.**

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Claims 1 and 17 each recite a watermarking system (“[a]n image forming apparatus for forming an image on an image forming medium and capable of forming a specific hidden pattern”) which has a particular set of hardware and software control signals which used together determine whether or not a specific hidden pattern is added to a color image. The hardware signal is necessarily generated for an image and represents the fact that image data exists in the image forming apparatus. Further, the hardware signal includes both an internal hardware signal (used when a test pattern is to be printed) and an external hardware signal (used for normal printing). The software control signal is supplied and used to determine if said specific hidden pattern is added to a color image. If either the external hardware signal or the software signal is detected, the specific hidden pattern is added to the output image. If the internal hardware signal is detected, the specific hidden pattern is *not* added to the output image.

Examiner has been unable to find anything in the prior art which would either anticipate the present claims or render the present claims obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. The closest prior art discovered is combination set forth in said previous office action, namely the combination of Sasanuma (USPN 5,719,681) in view of Watabe (USPN 5,796,936). Sasanuma in view of Watabe would teach a watermarking system that added a specific hidden pattern to color image data based on a redundant application of a hardware and a software system. The external and internal hardware signals and the software signal, along with the particularly manner said signals are used in recited claims 1 and 17, is not taught by Sasanuma in view of Watabe, nor has Examiner discovered prior which does fully teach

Art Unit: 2625

independent claims 1 and 17. As such, claims 1 and 17 are deemed allowable. Claims 2-16 are deemed allowable at least owing to their respective dependencies.

Any comment considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statements of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James A. Thompson whose telephone number is 571-272-7441. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30AM-5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David K. Moore can be reached on 571-272-7437. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

JAT
19 April 2007

DOUGLAS Q. TRAN
PRIMARY EXAMINER



James A. Thompson
Examiner
Technology Division 2625